



# the SOAR ACT

Led by Congressman Joe Neguse

Chair of the U.S. Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands

**Full Title:** *The Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act*

**Cosponsors:** Diana Degette (CO-01), Ed Perlmutter (CO-07), Debbie Dingell (MI-12), Ruben Gallego (AZ-07)

The SOAR Act would simplify the permitting process for outdoor guides, outfitters, education organizations, and college and university programs. The permitting process used by the agencies to issue outfitter-guide permits is outdated, overly complex, and time intensive. As a result, federal land management agencies are often unable to issue permits for guided outdoor recreation activities – even when the activities are within carrying capacity limits already established for the landscape. The unintended consequence is fewer people get to enjoy outdoor recreation activities, local economies don't receive the benefit of outdoor recreation visits, and guides have fewer opportunities to grow their careers and businesses.

The ***Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation (SOAR) Act*** would:

Streamline and simplify the permitting process by:

- Authorizing agencies to issue one permit for trips crossing multiple agency boundaries;
- Allowing guides to engage in reasonably similar activities under the same permit, eliminating duplicative processes for substantially similar services;
- Reauthorizing permitting authority for USFS and BLM, and granting authority to the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation so those agencies can retain permit fees;
- Instituting flat, per-person fees in place of dependent fees to simplify permitting calculations;
- Encouraging agencies to use permit fees to administer permits and simplify application processes;
- Setting important deadlines for reforming permit application processes, a goal USFS has set internally but never accomplished;

Improve access to the outdoors by:

- Authorizing temporary permits to help facilitate access for new users and providing for optional conversion to long term permits when appropriate;
- Improve procedures for fee collection and cost recovery by establishing a standard 50-hour cost recovery fee exemption for permit processing;



- Allowing businesses to use waivers for ordinary negligence, helping guides control liability insurance costs;
- Providing exemptions to indemnification requirements to schools, recreation departments, and universities that are prohibited from providing indemnification under state law, lowering barriers to access for public institutions.

**Endorsers:** Outdoor Industry Association, the Wilderness Society, America Outdoors Association, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, American Mountain Guides Association, Colorado Mountain School, Angler's Covey in Colorado Springs.